

Minutes:
C056 Task Groups:
Liturgical Resources; Pastoral and Teaching Materials
Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music
July 7-10, 2010
Retreat Center, Cathedral Center of St. Paul, Los Angeles, California

Chairs:

The chairs of the task groups met on Wednesday, July 7, from 3:00-5:30 p.m.

Present: Ruth Meyers, chair; Patrick Malloy; Susan Russell; Jay Johnson (joined the meeting in process)

Review of meeting schedule:

The chairs reviewed the details of the schedule for the meeting of the task groups. Goals for this meeting include formation of community and organization for work throughout the triennium, including a specific action plan between this meeting and the late November meeting.

SCLM blog:

Jay Johnson has agreed to develop a schedule of topics for posting to the blog and to oversee the content throughout the triennium. He will introduce this process during the task group meeting.

Canons and legal issues:

The chairs concurred that a task group should be formed to address this topic in time for them to participate in the November 2010 meeting of task groups. Meyers will follow up.

Meeting schedule:

The deadline for completing materials for the SCLM is September 15, 2011. The following schedule of meetings was agreed:

November 29-December 2, 2010: meeting of all task groups

January 12-14, 2011: onsite meeting of small working group to prepare for churchwide conversation in March 2011

March 15-16, 2011: churchwide consultation to present work in progress and receive feedback

May 31-June 2, 2011: meeting of all task groups

August 15-18, 2011: meeting of all task groups

Task groups

The task groups convened at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, July 7.

Present: The Rev. Stannard Baker; Ms. Heidi Clark; The Rev. Andrew Cooley; Mr. Dent Davidson; Mr. Jack Finlaw; The Rev. Michael Hopkins; The Rev. Jan "Raisin" Horn; The Rev. Susan Ironside; The Rev. Mark Jenkins; The Rev. Patrick Malloy; The Rev. Ruth Meyers; The Rev. Canon Susan Russell; Ms. Bowie Snodgrass; The Rev. Canon Sandye Wilson; The Rev. Mary Catherine Young. The Rev. Jay Emerson Johnson, chair of the theological resources task group, was present for the first half of the meeting.

Wednesday, July 7:

Meyers provided an overview of the work of the task groups in assisting the SCLM respond to Resolution C056. The remainder of the evening was spent getting to know one another. The evening concluded with Compline.

Thursday, July 8:

Morning Prayer was celebrated at 9 am.

Jay Johnson facilitated a theological reflection on same-sex blessings. Members reflected on the following questions about committed/covenanted relationships, their own or others (friends, colleagues, etc.), whether same-sex or not:

- How is the relationship named or described – marriage, covenant, union? Some other way? Are those involved in the relationship considered husband and wife? Partners? Lovers? Does it vary depending on the circumstances? How important (or not) is the language used for your understanding and experience of the relationship?
- For those involved in such a committed relationship, have you discerned any spiritual gifts that have emerged from your commitment that you may not have recognized apart from that commitment? For those considering someone else's relationship, have you discerned any spiritual gifts emerging from the relationship that benefits the wider community or perhaps yourself?
- For those in a relationship, what role does your faith community play in your ongoing commitment? Does the community offer something you find important in your relationship? For those reflecting on another's relationship, have you discerned what you or your faith community contributes to that relationship?
- As you reflect on these relationships, what about them (their qualities, gifts, character, etc.) that would make such relationships appropriate for a liturgical blessing? Or to put this in another way, why do we "bless" committed relationships in a church at all?

For those in a relationship:

- What role did your Christian faith play (if any!) in the early and now ongoing development of your relationship and in discerning your commitment to each other?
- Would you consider your committed relationship as part of your Christian calling and vocation to ministry? If so, how and in what ways?

For those considering someone else's relationship:

- How would you name the primary "blessing" of that relationship in your own life and in your faith community?
- Have you learned anything or gained fresh insights about your own life from observing the relationship and interacting with the couple?

Johnson concluded his presentation with this summary:

Much like ordination and other forms of ministry, human beings are called into covenantal relationships as a divine vocation. These covenants are sustained by spiritual disciplines, not contracts, and the divine grace in these relationships is discerned by the fruits of fidelity it yields (not least are communities of compassion, generosity, and hospitality). For that reason, covenantal relationships rightly belong to the mission of the Church in its ongoing witness to the good news of the Gospel; these relationships thus point beyond themselves to the Christian hope of union with God.

Johnson then presented the theological principles agreed by the SCLM at its March 2010 meeting:

- Double meaning of blessing, both blessing of couple and blessing of couple to community
- Covenant, generativity, sign of divine grace, fruits of fidelity
- Relation of blessing relationships to mission and ministry
- Biblical understandings of covenant, creation and new creation
- Vocation

In addition, the SCLM agreed that the materials to be developed must deal with passages often cited against gay/lesbian blessings.

Johnson spoke briefly about the SCLM blog. Meyers introduced the online project management system BaseCamp, which the groups will use to facilitate their work. She then announced the dates of upcoming meetings as agreed by the chairs, and the September 15, 2011, deadline for completion of this work.

The afternoon concluded with Evening Prayer.

The task groups met separately in the evening to begin to organize their work. The day concluded with Compline.

Friday, July 9:

The morning began with a celebration of the Eucharist. The task groups then continued to meet separately to define their task and develop an action plan. They meet in plenary at 4 pm to report to one another.

The pastoral and formation group decided to use the Province I resource for ministering to same-sex couples as the foundation for pastoral materials. To develop formation materials for congregations, they will review existing educational materials and survey congregations to determine what would be most useful.

The group working on liturgical resources developed principles that they will use to assess existing materials as well guide their development of new materials. They also discussed the component parts for a liturgy.

The afternoon concluded with Evening Prayer.

In the evening, the task groups met in plenary to suggest what should be included in the SCLM consultation at the September 2010 meeting of the House of Bishops; what should be discussed with the SCLM at its October 2010 meeting; and how a consultation might be structured with representatives of dioceses in Province I, as part of the October 2010 SCLM meeting. The day concluded with Compline.

Saturday, July 10:

After Morning Prayer, the task groups convened in plenary to review the logistics of the meeting. The group expressed their gratitude to Patrick Malloy and Dent Davidson for preparing the liturgies and asked that they do so for the November-December meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Meyers,
Project Chair